

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 213490
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SUBJECT: ARGENTINE INTEREST IN ANIMAL HEALTH DISCUSSIONS

REF: GENEVA 7045

1. BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WERE HELD MARCH 21 IN WASHINGTON, D.C. WITH ARGENTINE REPRESENTATIVES AND U.S. TECHNICAL EXPERTS ON U.S. HEALTH AND SANITARY REGULATIONS. THESE DISCUSSIONS HAVE CONTINUED ON THE SAME ISSUE WITH ARGENTINA SINCE 1974.

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 STATE 213490

2. THE ARGENTINES REQUESTED (1) U.S. RECOGNIZE FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE FREE AREAS IN ARGENTINA, (2) U.S. PERMIT ENTRY OF FRESH, CHILLED OR FROZEN BEEF FROM SUCH AREAS AND, (3) U.S. CONSIDER AN AMENDMENT TO STATUTE GOVERNING IMPORTS FROM FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE COUNTRIES TO RECOGNIZE DISEASE FREE AREAS IN SUCH COUNTRIES.

3. U.S. TECHNICAL EXPERTS INFORMED ARGENTINE REPRESENTATIVES OF U.S. REGULATIONS GOVERNING IMPORTS OF BEEF FROM FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE COUNTRIES AND PROVISIONS FOR DISEASE FREE TERRITORIES. MAJOR REQUIREMENTS ARE: (1) TERRITORY MUST HAVE FULL AUTONOMY FROM MOTHER COUNTRY IN ALL ANIMAL HEALTH MATTERS, INCLUDING IMPORT AND EXPORT PROCEDURES, (2) TERRITORY MUST HAVE QUALIFIED VETERINARY SERVICE, (3) VACCINATIONS FOR REINDERPEST AND FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE ARE NOT PERMITTED IN TERRITORY (4) USDA MUST APPROVE TERRITORY'S INSPECTION SYSTEM AND QUARANTINE STATION FOR ANIMALS AND MEAT IMPORTED FROM MOTHER COUNTRY. U.S. TECHNICIANS TOLD ARGENTINES THAT SINCE REGION MENTIONED AS DISEASE FREE (SOUTH RIO PLATA) NOT GEOGRAPHICALLY SEPARATE FROM ARGENTINA, IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTROL MOVEMENT OF ANIMALS WITHIN AND OUTSIDE AREA.

4. IN REGARD TO CHANGING U.S. STATUTE, IT IS USDA'S VIEW THAT THE TARIFF ACT OF 1930 WHICH PROHIBITS IMPORTS OF FRESH, CHILLED OR FORZEN BEEF FROM COUNTRIES ENDEMIC WITH FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE HAS BEEN ESSENTIAL IN MAINTAINING THE U.S. FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE FREE STATUS SINCE 1930. HENCE, THEY SEE NO REASON TO CHANGE THE STATUE REGARDING ENTRY OF PRODUCT FROM SUCH COUNTRIES. USDA DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE LAW HAS BECOME OUTDATED OR IS UNREASONABLE GOVEN THE IMPORTANCE OF THE US CATTLE INDUSTRY AND THE ENORMOUS ECONOMIC DAMAGE THAT WOULD ENSUE FROM OUTBREAKS OF FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE. AS INDICATED ABOVE, THE LAW DOES NOT PREVENT IMPORTATION OF MEAT FROM GEOGRAPHICALLY SEPARATE TERRITORIES OF UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 213490

FOOT-AND-MOUTH DESIGNATED COUNTRIES UNDER SPECIFIED CONDITIONS, (US IMPORTS FROM N. IRELAND BUT NOT THE ISLAND OF GREAT BRITAIN ARE AN EXAMPLE). HOWEVER, THE RISKS OF PERMITTING IMPORTS FROM GEOGRAPHICALLY INDISTINCT AREAS WHERE CROSS-BORDER MOVEMENTS OF ANIMALS CANNOT AS A PRACTICAL MATTER BE COMPLETELY CONTROLLED ARE UNACCEPTABLY LARGE.

5. THE PRESENT VIEW OF U.S. TECHNICIANS TOWARD ARGENTINE IS TO CONTINUE EMPHASIZING THE U.S. ANIMAL HEALTH AND SANITARY LAWS AND REGULATIONS THAT GOVERN AND PROTECT HUMAN CONSUMPTION AND THE DOMESTIC LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY AND ENCOURAGE ARGENTINA TO MEET THESE REQUIREMENTS THROUGH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

6. U.S. REPRESENTATIVES REITERATED WILLINGNESS TO MEET BILATERALLY FOR ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION ON THE ISSUE OF HEALTH AND SANITARY REGULATIONS.

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